

# TOWARDS URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

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*Towards Urban Sustainability*

*Proposal for the flood season in Nezahualcoyotl District, State of Mexico, Mexico.*

By 2025, more than 60 percent of the earth's inhabitants will reside in cities, a phenomenon that is now reflected in the "less developed countries". Without any relation to their economic condition, big cities are taking a place in the world and the populations are growing vertiginously. The urban space has been experienced the "human-hyper-density" creating polarization and new challenges to be solved. Is not difficult to understand that the anarchic over-crowding of cities has unpredictable situations for its inhabitants, sometimes with tragic consequences and we cannot know when or how will be hiten by a natural disasters of big proportions as a earthquake or an inundation as it has hap - pened in the past. We must learn how to live with harmony with the nature and be prepared for this events.

A year ago I meet a Mexican group of architects that proposed the biggest urban regeneration project that can change the face of one of the biggest cities in the world: Mexico City. Their idea was to recover part of the old Texcoco Lake, where the City is founded and make the city emerges again from the lake (some architects call to this city the "Anti-Atlantis") let's say, a kind of a 22 million people's "New Venice", trying to take back the original urban proposals (channels, big streets and the lake, of course) that started the developed of the city 700 years ago. The most interesting project I had ever heard about, but also one of the most difficult, but not impossible dreams. The idea was to change, from the urban chaos into a ecological zone. Today, almost the 70 percent of the drinking water that the city uses is taken from very far dams and lakes, and the sewage system has to run hundreds of kilometers to be disposed after be treated. The rainwater goes to the drainage and is not use to refill the necessities of the subsoil. But the worst part is that the rainwater affects many communities located in low-altitude zones suffering water flood -even Mexico City is located 2,240 meters above the sea level, is a valley, where the water stack in the extinct lake lower levels.

The idea of this proposal is, taking one of the zones that use to be flooded every year and also has a very simple urban pattern, transform the first floors of the houses in a sort of free-space area and use the superior floors as a close-rooms. Make a series of installations for boats, piers and even gardens that will be parks on the non-raining season, but also water-recreational areas when the water is present. A simple and logical step: to be prepared for every's year inundation. Then, the people will be ready to receive every year's changes and also make a better community, a tourist zone and keep the transportation system free of problems switching the car-system into a boat-system. Also the public buses will change into water-buses, trying to keep the zone free of contamination using man-force systems like the ones are using in the south of Mexico City in a tourist place named Xochimilco. To prepare the city for this could be a first step to recover the lake again and domestic the water into a new urban dimension.

# ix ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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